

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ROME 20368 151911Z  
ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00  
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R 151620Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1778  
INFO USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T ROME 20368

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, NATO, IT  
SUBJECT: ITALIAN FUNDING FOR NATO

REF USNATO 6852

SUMMARY. EMBASSY HAS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT AS TO WISDOM OF  
FURTHER PRESSING GOI ON AUGMENTED INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS AT  
THIS POINT. END SUMMARY.

1. AS DEPARTMENT AND USNATO ARE AWARE, EMBASSY HAS HAD NO  
QUALMS ABOUT URGING GREATER ITALIAN CONTRIBUCTIONS TO THE  
COMMON DEFENSE, FROM THE OPERATIONAL THROUGH THE POLITICAL  
LEVELS OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT. THIS HAS BEEN TRUE, IN  
PARTICULAR, OF INCREASED INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING, A SIGNIFI-  
CANT ITALIAN ROLE IN AWACS, AND EARLY PASSAGE OF MAJOR  
EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT BILL FOR ARMY AND AIR FORCE.

2. HOWEVER, WE DOUBT WE SHOULD HIT GOI AGAIN AT THIS  
POINT ON INFRASTRUCTURE. TO DO SO WOULD INEVITABLY GIVE  
THE IMPRESSION THAT WE GIVE PRIORITY TO THAT PARTICU-  
LAR ASPECT OF THE OVERALL PROBLEM, DESPITE ANY PROTES-  
TATIONS WE MIGHT MAKE TO THE CONTRARY. SO FAR AS THE  
EMBASSY IS AWARE, USG FEELS THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO  
SINGLE OUT ANY ONE OF THESE THREE PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL  
EMPHASIS.

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3. HOWEVER, WERE WE TO GO BACK TO GOI ON ALL THREE

(OR MORE) PROGRAMS, RESPONSE WOULD ALMOST INEVITABLY BE NEGATIVE GROUNDS THAT ITALIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION DOES NOT PERMIT SUCH VOLUME OF INCREASED EXPENDITURES. WHILE THERE ARE VALID ARGUMENTS TO BE MADE IN ECONOMIC TERMS FOR EACH OF THE THREE MAJOR SECURITY PROGRAMS, GOI REMAINS VERY MUCH PREOCCUPIED WITH PUTTING ITS ECONOMIC HOUSE IN ORDER. PSYCHOLOGICALLY, THEREFORE, THE MOMENT IS NOT RIPE FOR A DEMARCHE. TO THIS MUST BE ADDED THAT THE ITALIAN HOLIDAY SEASON IS VERY MUCH UPON US, THE GOVERNMENT IS GEARING DOWN AND WILL NOT RETURN TO FULL SWING UNTIL MID-JANUARY, AND EVERYBODY IS WAITING FOR CLEAR SIGNALS FROM THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

4. AN OPTIMUM APPROACH, WERE IT TO PROVE POSSIBLE, WOULD BE A COMPREHENSIVE ONE, AT HIGH POLITICAL LEVEL OR LEVELS, FOLLOWING THE NATO BRIEFING IN CAPITALS (REFTEL). OUR DEMARCHE WOULD PRESUMABLY ECHO THE THOUGHT THAT THE MAJOR NEW AMERICAN COMMITMENTS TO NATO ARE DESIGNED IN PART TO STIMULATE, NOT TO STULTIFY, EUROPE'S COMMITMENT TO ITS OWN DEFENSE. BEAUDRY

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NNN

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